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ANNUAL**

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YEAR ONE BATMAN



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**YEAR ONE:
SCARECROW
MASTERS OF FEAR**

*The Joker, Catwoman, Two-Face,
Hugo Strange, and dozens of
others' last survival.*

*I've faced and survived
them all.*

*I'm on my way to
becoming a legend.*

*As dark as the night itself,
and as mysterious as the
moon.*

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I've faced and survived
them all

I'm on my way to becoming a legend.

As dark as the night itself,
and as mysterious as the
moon.

DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR

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They're whispering about the bat in all the city's dark corners, and in some of the bright ones, too.



But I'm still new, still learning.



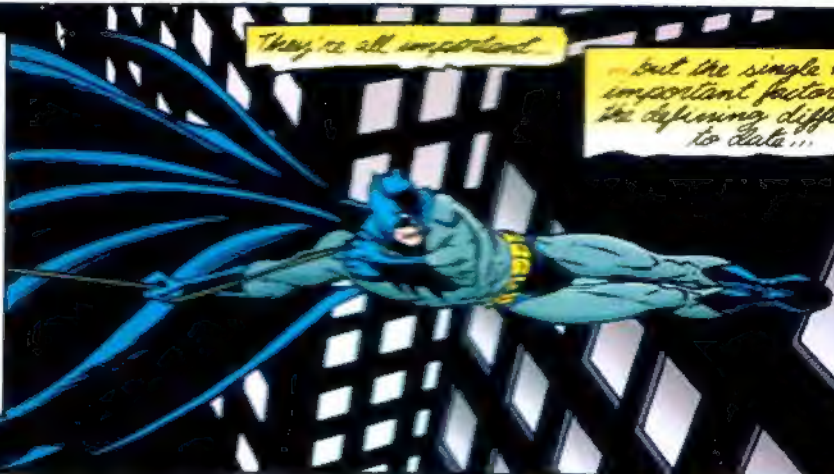
the physical prowess and fighting skills...

...the detective methods and the tools in my belt. Gloves and boots.



They're all important.

...but the single most important factor, and the defining difference to date...



...is the one element no one can touch, and the one thing they can never fight.

Not even the mad ones.





Fear

Fear and intimidation



As long as I cloak myself in darkness and strike like a beast from the shadows...



--I hold sway over every other denizen of the night...



A rabid, monstrous bat on high.



YOU CALLED?

HIHH



CHARLIE



YOU REALLY THINK IT'S NECESSARY TO JOLT MY HEART? OR WISE?

YOU'LL HAVE TO GET USED TO IT, CAPTAIN.

IT'S THE WAY I AM.



AND IF THE WAY I AM WERE A HAIR MORE JUMPY...

YOU SIGNALLED FOR A REASON?

THANKS TO YOUR BOGEYMAN ACT--



--IT'S SCATTERED ALL OVER THE ROOF.

WHO?



THE DEAN OF GOTHAM UNIVERSITY AND HIS FOUR REGENTS--IN THE UNIVERSITY OFFICE THEY USED AS A MEETING ROOM.

DEAD?



THEY'RE IN THE MORGUE AND THEY'RE NOT SHIVERING.

THEY LOOK... TERRIFIED.



CARDIAC ARREST--ALL FIVE OF THEM.

LITERALLY... SCARED TO DEATH?

WITH NO SIGNS OF
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE,
SURE LOOKS THAT WAY
--AND ESTIMATED TIME
OF DEATH IS THE SAME
FOR ALL FIVE.

MURDER?

YOU
TELL
ME...



WE'VE
AGREED TO HELP
EACH OTHER ON
THE WEIRD
ONES. AND IN
ALL MY YEARS
AS A COP--
INCLUDING
CHICAGO--
I'VE SEEN
NOTHING
WEIRDER.

ANYTHING
ELSE?



JUST THIS.

A
STRAW?

LEFT OR DROPPED
ON THE CENTER OF
THE MEETING TABLE
--BETWEEN FIVE
HEART ATTACKS.



I'LL
GET ON IT,
CAPTAIN...

...SEE WHAT
I CAN SCARE
UP.



I WASN'T
AFRAID OF
THAT.



FIFTEEN
YEARS
AGO:

WE FEAR SOMETHING
BEFORE WE HATE IT. A
CHILD WHO FEARS
NOISES BECOMES A
MAN WHO HATES NOISE.
—Cyril Connolly

"I WAS
ALWAYS
LANKY AND
GANGLY,
EVEN AS A
YOUTH..."



"... WITH A HERKY-JERKY GAIT
WHICH NEVER FAILED TO DRAW
DERISION AND SCORN."



HEY,
CRANE--
GOT A DATE
WITH SOME
CROWS?

YEAH--YOU SURE
LOOK LIKE A
SCARECROW!



HE ALSO LOOKS
LIKE A DIFFERENT
CRANE-- ICHABOD
CRANE!

YOU ASK ME,
HIS HEAD'S A
SLEEPY HOLLOW!



"BUT HOWEVER ILL-COORDINATED
I APPEARED..."

RUN
SCARECROW--
RUN!



"... SPEED, OF
NECESSITY, WAS
NINE."



Gotham University lost a
Professor of Psychology
-- Avram Brashovitz --
just about a year ago.



Fatal fall
from the
roof of the
Chemistry
Building.

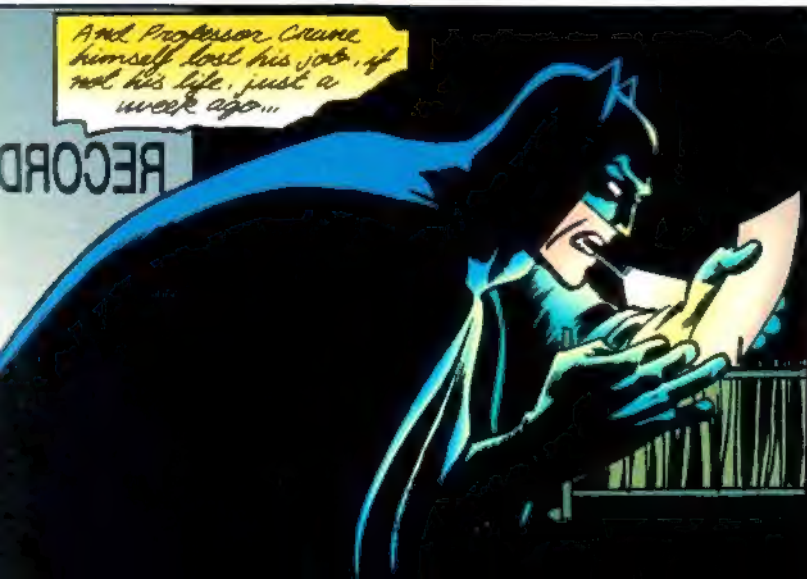


Brashovitz was
replaced by a
graduate student
and former pupil...

Jonathan Crane

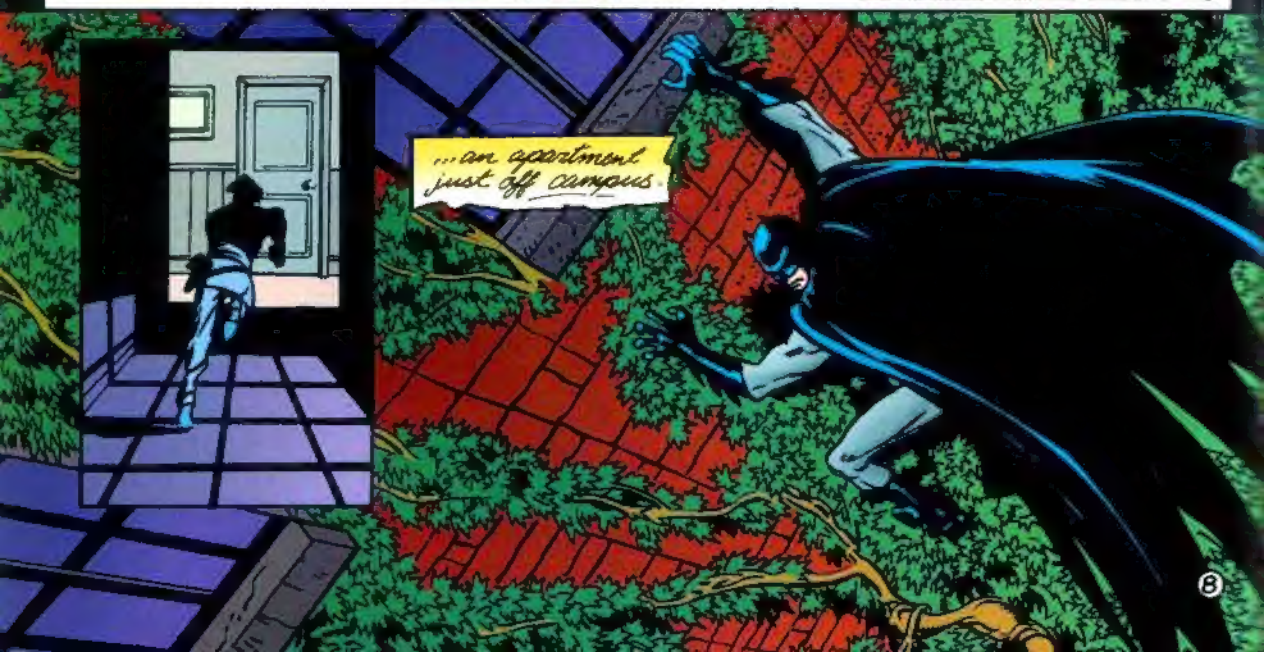


And Professor Crane
himself lost his job, if
not his life, just a
week ago...



Dismissed for
"unorthodox
and recklessly
endangering
classroom
behavior"...

...in a
unanimous
vote by the
Dean and his
four regents.



TEN YEARS
AGO:

"EVERY SCARECROW HAS A
SECRET AMBITION TO TERRORIZE"
--Stanislaus J. Lec

"AS A LONER MY PURSUITS WERE
LIMITED, AND I WAS ALMOST
FORCED TO BECOME A
BIBLIOPHILE."

GET A LOAD
O' FREAKY-GECK
BOOKWORM
CRANE!

"BOOKS COULDN'T SNEER AND
JEER LIKE MY NEMESIS BO
GRIBBS--OR WORSE, GIGGLE
LIKE HIS GIRLFRIEND SHERRY."

"I PRETENDED
TO BE DELIVIOUS
--EVEN SUPERIOR--
BUT OH, HOW I
HURT INSIDE...
AND OH, HOW
I RAGED."

"I WAS SEARED AND
SCARRED BY SUCH FEELINGS
EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE--
COMPLEX, CONFLICTING
EMOTIONS WHICH I FIERCELY
SUPPRESSED..."

"...UNTIL THAT ONE DAY WHEN
EVERYTHING BOTTLED INSIDE
ME--

PIRAAAHH!

"ALTHOUGH SUCH RELEASES WOULD
SOON BECOME A SECRET THRILL
REPEATED AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY,
THAT FIRST INCIDENT LEFT NOTHING
BUT SHAME AND LOATHINGS..."

I... I AM NOTHING BUT A
SCARECROW... AND THE ONLY
THINGS I CAN SCARE ARE
SMALL, WEAK THINGS...

NOTHING
BUT BIRDS!

--SIMPLY
EXPLODED.

THAT DAY WAS DOUBLY SIGNIFICANT--FOR, HAVING AVOIDED IRVING'S TALE EVER SINCE I'D EARNED THE DERISIVE NICKNAME 'ICHABOD,' I FINALLY SUCCUMBED TO CURIOSITY ABOUT MY FICTIONAL NAMESAKE

"I WAS INITIALLY DISAPPOINTED TO LEARN THAT ICHABOD CRANE WAS A BOOKISH LONER JUST LIKE ME...



"...BUT I WAS SOON ENTHRALLED BY THE SCENE IN WHICH HE AMAZED THE OTHER CHARACTERS WITH HIS WILD DANCING SKILLS. HIS LONG LIMBS AND SPINDLY PHYSIQUE AT LAST ADMIRER FOR THE ASSETS THEY TRULY WERE!

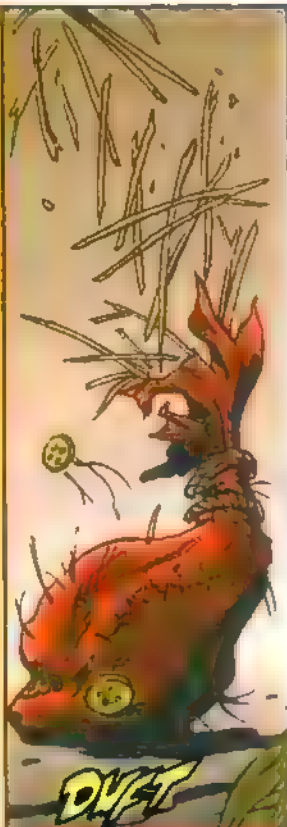


"INSPIRED, I IMMEDIATELY RACED TO A CORNFIELD NEAR MY HOME, WHERE NO ONE COULD SEE ME AMIDST THE TALL STALKS--AND WHERE I SPENT DIZZING HOURS IN IMITATION OF MY NEW HERO.



"IN SHORT, I DID THE ICHABOD--AND BECAME A WHIRLING DERVISH.

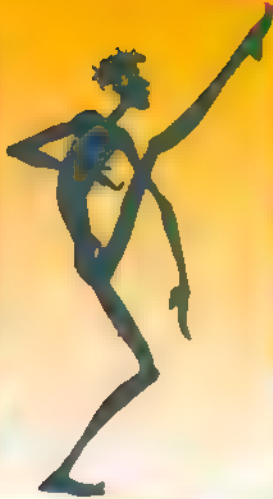
"THE DANCE, IN MY MIND, WAS INSPIRED BY THE DANCE, MY FRENZIED GYRATIONS FILLED ME WITH A SUPREME CONFIDENCE I HAD NEVER KNOWN--



"--EVEN AS THEY ABRUPTLY TURNED VIOLENT.

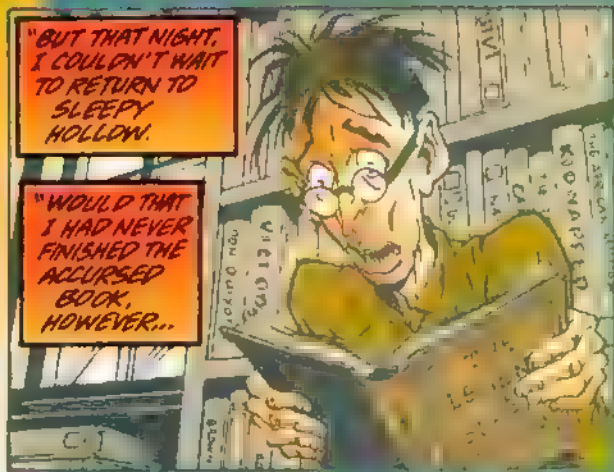
"GIVEN THE EXHILARATION OF THAT AFTERNOON, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT I WOULD EXTEND MY UNIQUE FORM OF 'VIOLENT DANCING' INTO A SERIOUS STUDY OF THE MARTIAL ARTS, MASTERING ONE PARTICULARLY APT TECHNIQUE...

"THE CRANE STYLE OF KUNG FU, OF COURSE.



"BUT THAT NIGHT, I COULDN'T WAIT TO RETURN TO SLEEPY HOLLOW.

"WOULD THAT I HAD NEVER FINISHED THE ACCURSED BOOK, HOWEVER...



"...FOR I READ WITH MOUNTING HORROR AS ICHABOD CRANE FLED DOWN THAT LONELY HAUNTED ROAD IN FULL TILT TERROR...



"...WITH THE LEGENDARY HEADLESS HORSEMAN IN RELENTLESS PURSUIT.

"I ACTUALLY GASPED, FULLY SHARING ICHABOD'S FEAR, WHEN THAT DARK DEMON REARED UP AND HURLED HIS SEVERED HEAD...

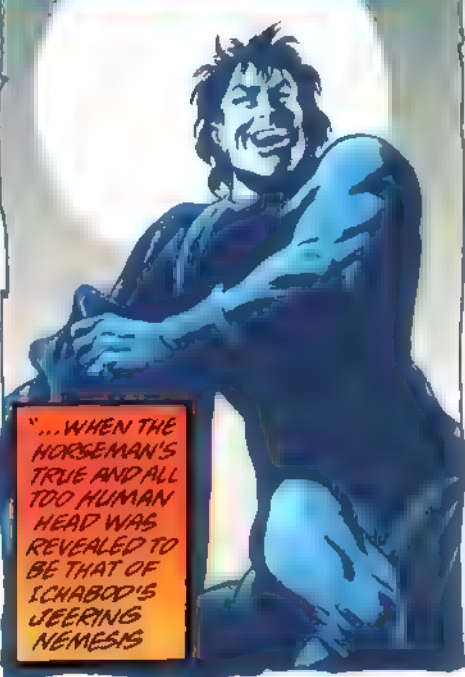


"TRUE, I WANTED MY NEW HERO TO TURN AND FACE THE HORSEMAN, BUT I COULDN'T REALLY FAULT ICHABOD FOR FLEEING SUCH A SUPERNATURAL THREAT.



"AFTER ALL, I WOULD HAVE DONE PRECISELY THE SAME

"IMAGINE, THEN, MY FURIOUS DISBELIEF--THE SENSE OF BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT AND SHEER BETRAYAL I FELT...



"...WHEN THE HORSEMAN'S TRUE AND ALL TOO HUMAN HEAD WAS REVEALED TO BE THAT OF ICHABOD'S JEERING NEMESIS

"MY HERO--MY NAMESAKE--HAD FLED IN CRAVEN TERROR AND COWARDICE FROM NOTHING BUT A HARMLESS GOURD



"I COULDN'T BEAR THE SHAME...

"A PUMPKIN?!"



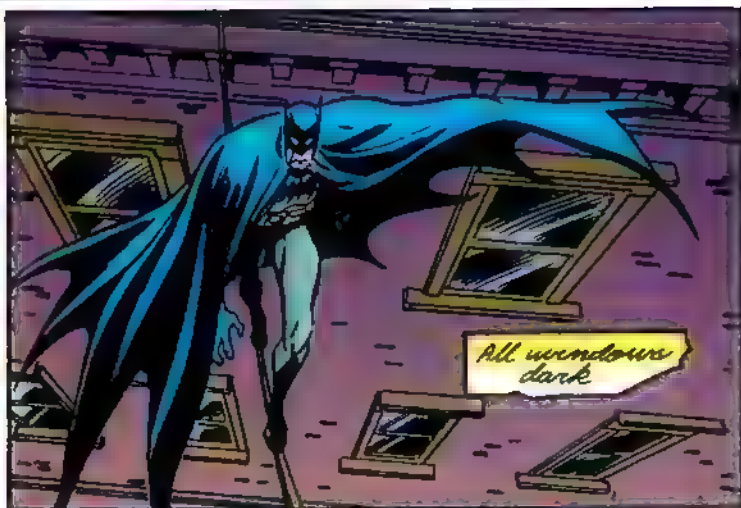
"NO!!"

"AND THAT'S WHEN I FINALLY ASSERTED MYSELF--IN DEFIANCE OF CRUEL DESTINY--AND UTTERED MY FATEFUL VOW..."

"IN THE STORY OF MY LIFE, THE SCRAWNY SCARECROW WILL WIN IN THE END--AND THE LAST LAUGH, I SWEAR, WILL BE MINE!!"

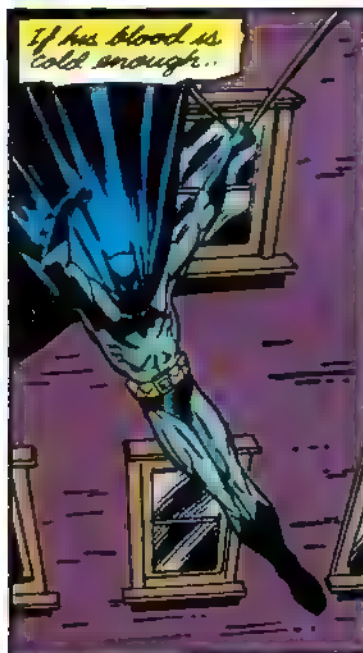


*Crane's apartment
is on the third
floor*

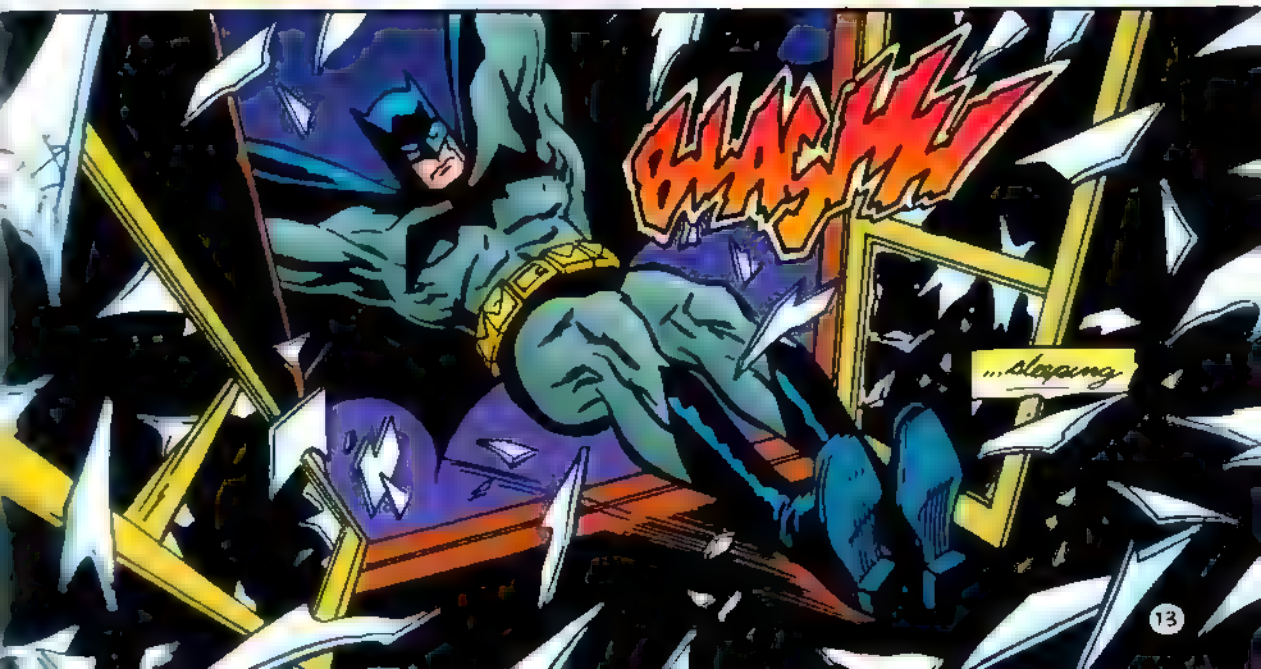


*All windows
dark*

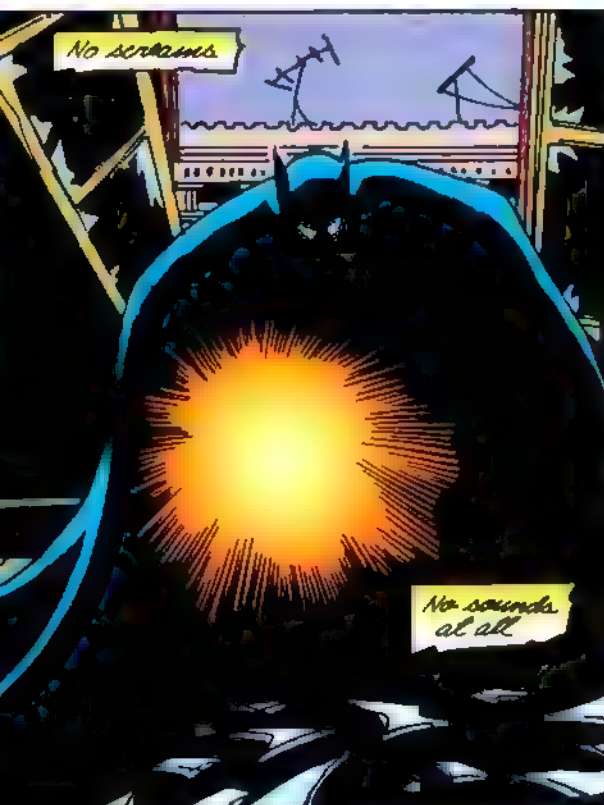
*If his blood is
cold enough...*



... Maybe I'll catch him ...



... sleeping



No screams

No sounds
at all



Appointed
for books...



...and lots
of them...



...but not
a single
volume
remaining



Yet the dust pattern proves the
books were only recently
removed

Crim's gone...and he
took the time to pack a
lot of boxes, proving
the murders were
hardly committed
on impulse



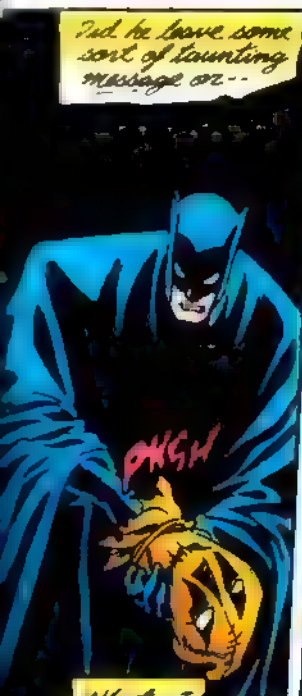
They were premeditated,
planned...and executed
only after he'd already
cleared out



TNGG

Typhure...





*Did he leave some
sort of taunting
message or...*

What...?



Gaa



*Hazel, pounding...
fear... can't control
myself...*



NOOO!!



*MURDER!
CAN'T STOP IT!*

*HE'S SHOOTING
BOTH OF THEM!!*

They're dead... and I can't
stop him! Can't do anything!



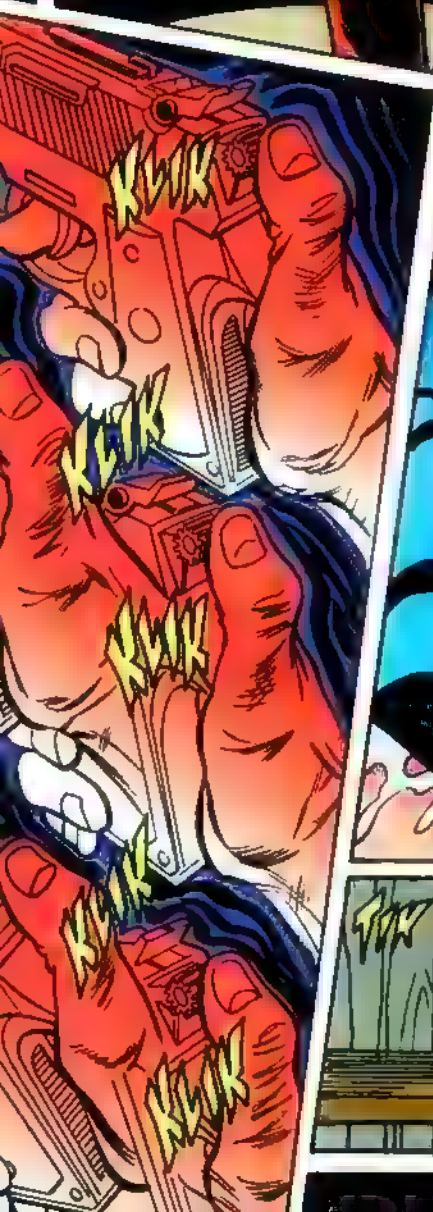
Helpless...
terrified...



THE
BLOOD!

THE
GUN!

THE
NOISE--!



Ticking... but
what...?



A bomb...?



SIX YEARS AGO

YOU CAN DISCOVER WHAT YOUR ENEMY
WANTS MOST BY OBSERVING THE MEANS HE
TAKES TO OBTAIN IT.

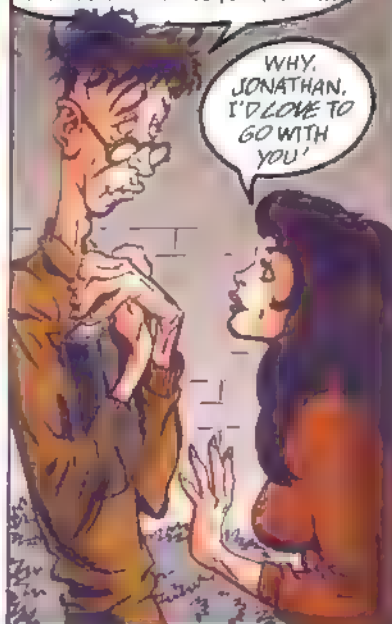
"BY THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN I HAD
DEVELOPED A HUGE CRUSH ON
SHERRY SQUIRES--WHO WOULDN'T
YOU KNOW IT, HAD BEEN GOING
STEADY WITH MY HATED TORTMENTOR
BO GRIGGS FOR FOUR YEARS



EVEN AFTER WORD OF THEIR BREAKUP
HAD SPREAD IT TOOK ME A WEEK TO
BUILD UP THE NECESSARY COURAGE...

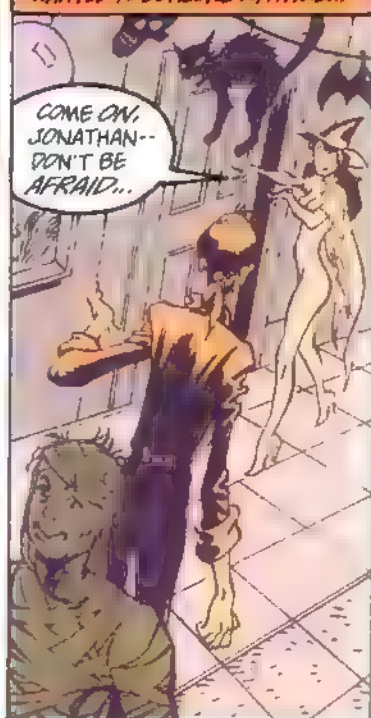
SH-SHERRY, I...UH...J-JASON
GREENE'S HAVING A H-HALLOWEEN
PARTY AND I, UH...THAT IS, I WAS
WONDERING IF M-MAYBE Y-YOU...

WHY,
JONATHAN,
I'D LOVE TO
GO WITH
YOU!



IF HER ACCEPTANCE WAS SHEER JOY,
THE PARTY ITSELF WAS NIRVANA--
ESPECIALLY WHEN SHERRY SAID SHE
WANTED TO BE ALONE WITH ME...

COME ON,
JONATHAN--
DON'T BE
AFRAID...



"THE DARK JOURNEY DOWN THOSE
STAIRS WAS BOTH FRIGHTENING
AND DELICIOUSLY THRILLING



"I FELT ALMOST AS BIG AS I HAD
WHEN I'D KICKED THE SCARECROW'S
HEAD FROM ITS BODY.

"I SUPPOSE IT WAS THE FLUORANCE
WHICH MADE IT SEEM SO WARM
DOWN THERE, BUT IT WAS THE
CHEMISTRY OF SHERRY'S PERFUME
WHICH SENT MY MIND REELING...

N-NOW
WH-WHAT?

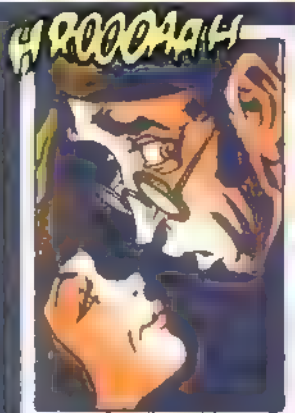
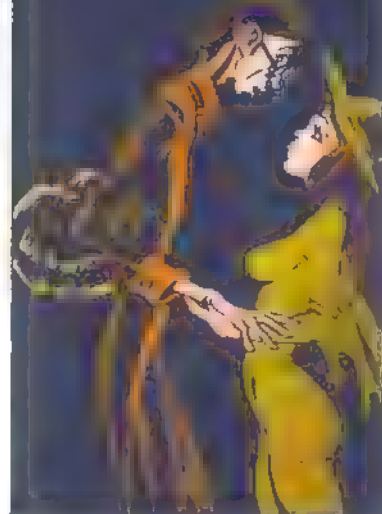
NOW, SILLY,,
YOU KISS
ME



"I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT

"IT WAS ALL I'D EVER
WANTED, AND MORE

"IT WAS HEAVEN
ITSELF..."

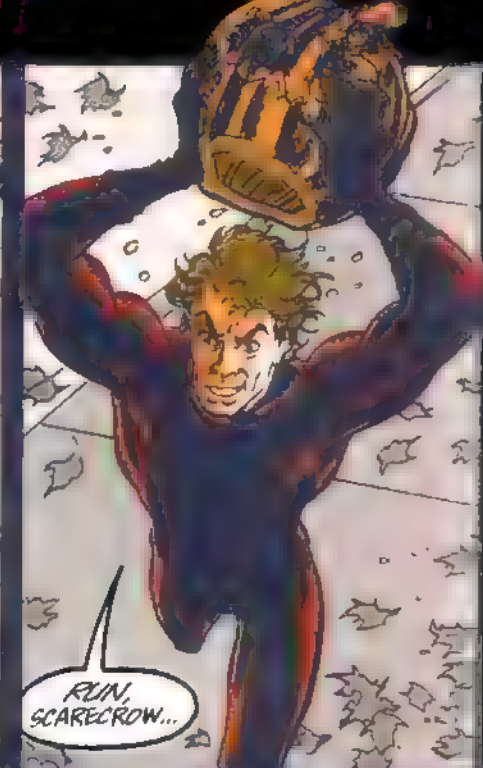


"...UNTIL, WITH THE ABRUPTNESS
OF A BLOODCURDLING SHRIEK,
IT ALL TURNED TO HELL

WRAAAH!!!

N-N-NO...





"THERE AND THEN
I MADE A NEW VOW--
TO REDOUBLE MY
EFFORTS AND FINALLY
CONQUER THE BANE
OF MY MISERABLE
EXISTENCE..."



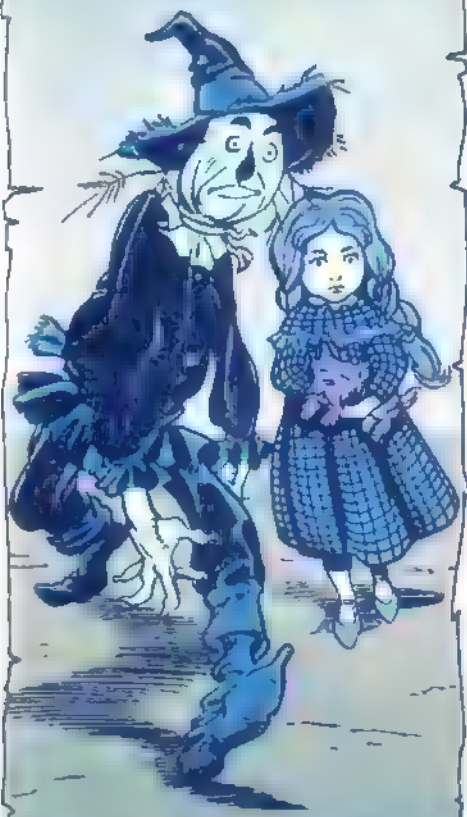
"FEAR."

"ONCE AGAIN A LONER, I RETREATED TO THE
SANCTUARY OF MY ROOM AND THE SAFETY
OF MY BOOKS."

"BAUM WAS
THE LAST LIGHT
READING I EVER
INDULGED IN..."



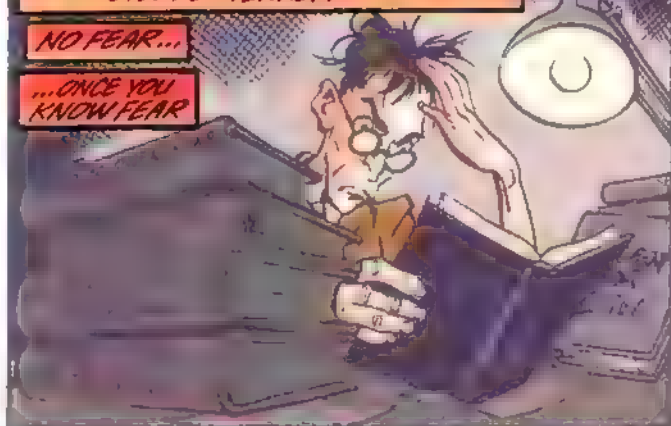
"...BUT I WAS DIFFERENT FROM
HIS SCARECROW, BECAUSE I DID
HAVE A BRAIN, AND I SUDDENLY
SAW THE FULFILLMENT OF MY
VOW IN ITS CONCENTRATED USE."



"THENCEFORTH MY READING BECAME MUCH
HEAVIER--AS I EMBARKED ON A FEVERISH
STUDY OF TERROR"

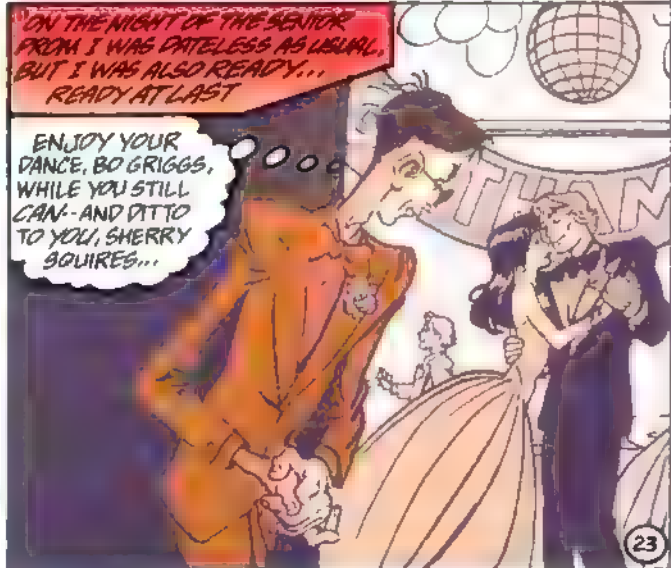
NO FEAR...

...ONCE YOU
KNOW FEAR



"ON THE NIGHT OF THE SENIOR
PROM I WAS DATELESS AS USUAL,
BUT I WAS ALSO READY...
READY AT LAST"

ENJOY YOUR
DANCE, BO GRIGGS,
WHILE YOU STILL
CAN--AND DITTO
TO YOU, SHERRY
SQUIRES...



"NO ONE NOTICED WHEN I LEFT THE PROM EARLY--BUT BY THE TIME THE OTHERS GOT TO THE TRADITIONAL PARKING SPOT, EVERYTHING WAS IN PLACE."



"I GAVE THEM TEN MINUTES--"



"--BEFORE TOSSING THE CHERRY BOMBS"

"THE SMOKE BOMB WAS NEXT, RIGHT IN FRONT OF BO GRIGGS' CAR, TURNING SHERRY'S JEERS TO FEARS."



"AND THEN I LET THEM HAVE IT--WITH THE VERY THING THEY HAD MOCKED FOR YEARS--WITH ME, SCARECROW JONATHAN CRANE"



"IT WAS ONLY A WATER PISTOL, BUT IN THE DARK IT BECAME THE FIRST INSTRUMENT OF TRUE FEAR I EVER HELD"

THEY SCATTERED IN PANIC, SCREAMING AND SPINNING THEIR WHEELS - BIG STRONG HANDSOME BULLIES NO MORE, AND LITTLE MORE THAN BIRDS.

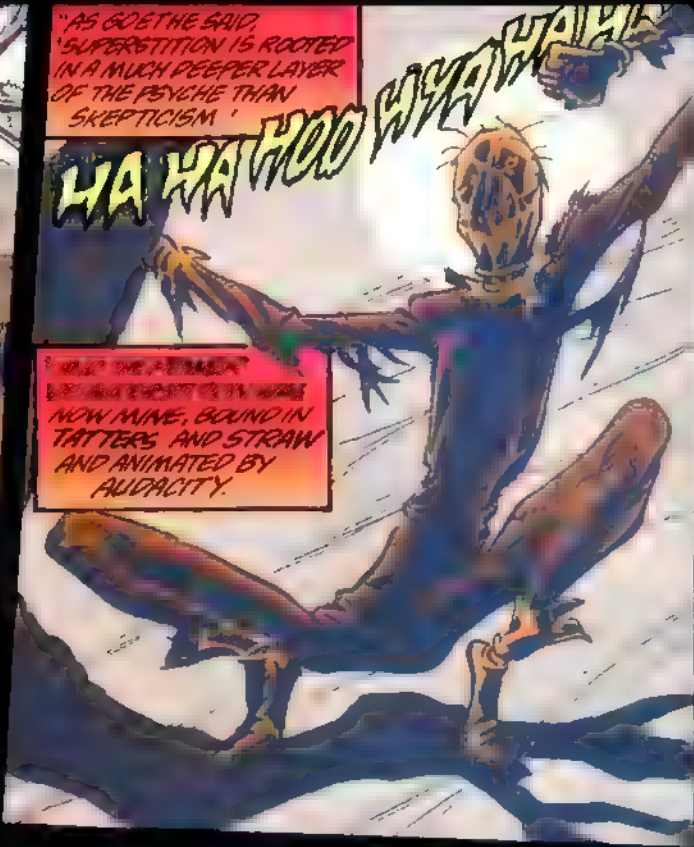
HIROOAAA

SKREEEE SKREEEE

"AS GOETHE SAID, 'SUPERSTITION IS ROOTED IN A MUCH DEEPER LAYER OF THE PSYCHE THAN SKEPTICISM.'"

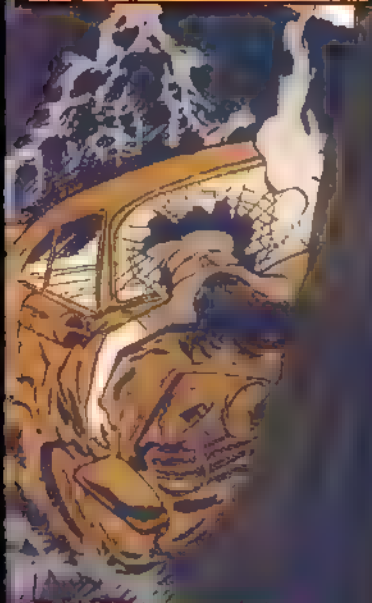
HA HA HOO WAA WAA

... THE PAPER
...
NOW MINE, BOUND IN TATTERS AND STRAW AND ANIMATED BY ALIQUITY.



"I LATER LEARNED THAT ONE CAR EVEN SNEERVED RIGHT OFF THE ROAD

"FOOTBALL STUID BO GRIGGS WAS PARALYZED FROM THE KNEES DOWN BY THE RUST OF HIS LIFE WHILE SAFETY GURDERS WHISTLED ALL WAY THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD, DIED BEFORE DAWN



"BUCKLE UP, BABE"

"AS FOR ME, I WAS READY FOR COLLEGE..."



"... WHEN I LEARNED
...
IN FEAR."

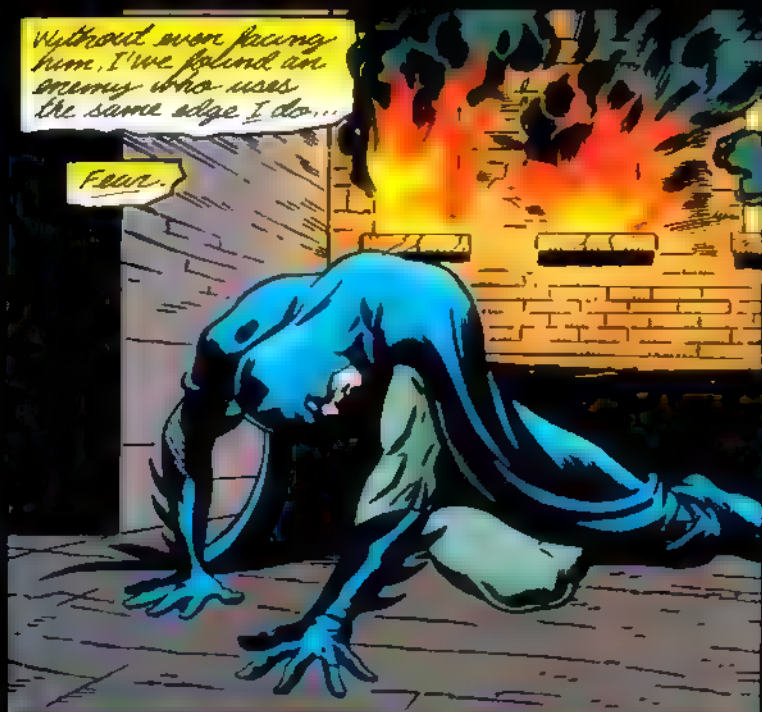


*The shakes...
wearing off
now.*

*...but heart still
pounding.*

*Without ever facing
him, I've found an
enemy who uses
the same edge I do...*

Fear.



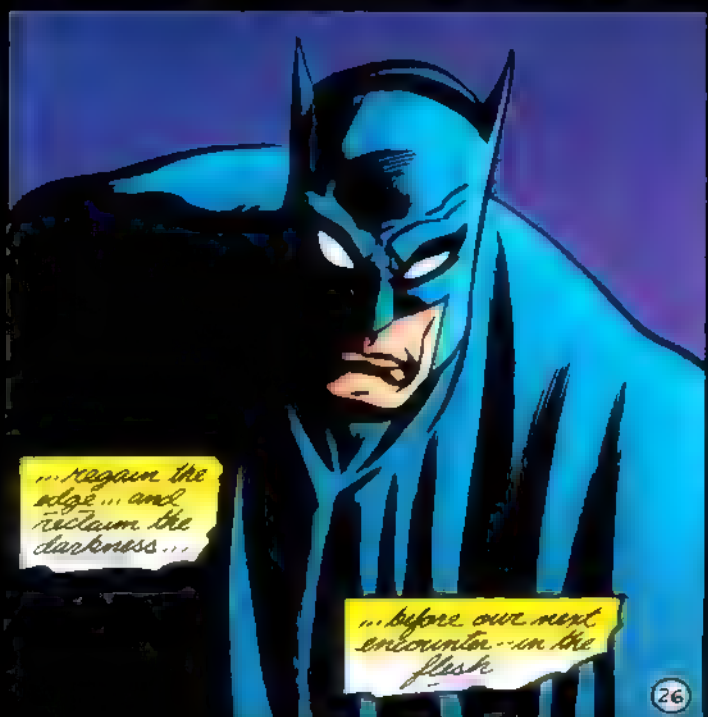
*I've just tasted
my own medicine...*

*...and I'm hardly
immune to it.*

*Got to do something
to counteract it...*



*...level the
playing field...*



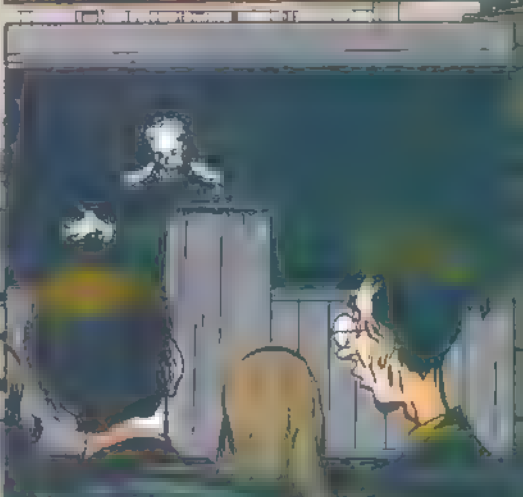
*...Regain the
edge... and
reclaim the
darkness...*

*...before our next
encounter... on the
floor.*

ONE YEAR AGO:

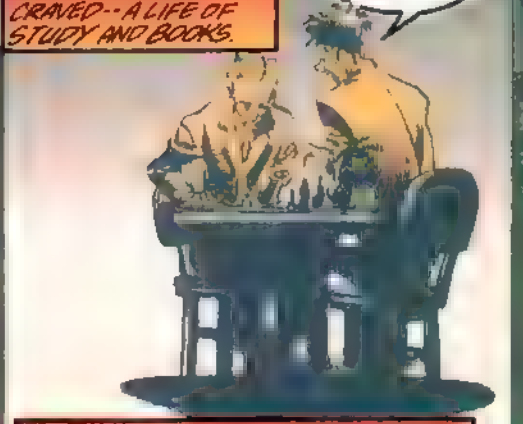
FOR MONTHS BEFORE, WE HAD APTURE 1
THAT MAKE US LOVED AND FAULTS THAT MAKE
US FEARED -

"MY FOUR YEARS AT GOTHAM UNIVERSITY
WERE SPENT IN A CONCENTRATED STUDY
OF PSYCHOLOGY, CHEMISTRY, THE BRAIN'S
BIOCHEMICAL PROCESSES-- AND FEAR IN
ITS EVERY ASPECT



"ALTHOUGH BRAMOWITZ
GAVE SHORT SHIRFT TO
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
FEAR FOR MY TASTES,
HIS WAS THE LIFE I
CRAVED-- A LIFE OF
STUDY AND BOOKS.

AND
YOUR CHECK,
PROFESSOR...
BECOMES MY
MATE.

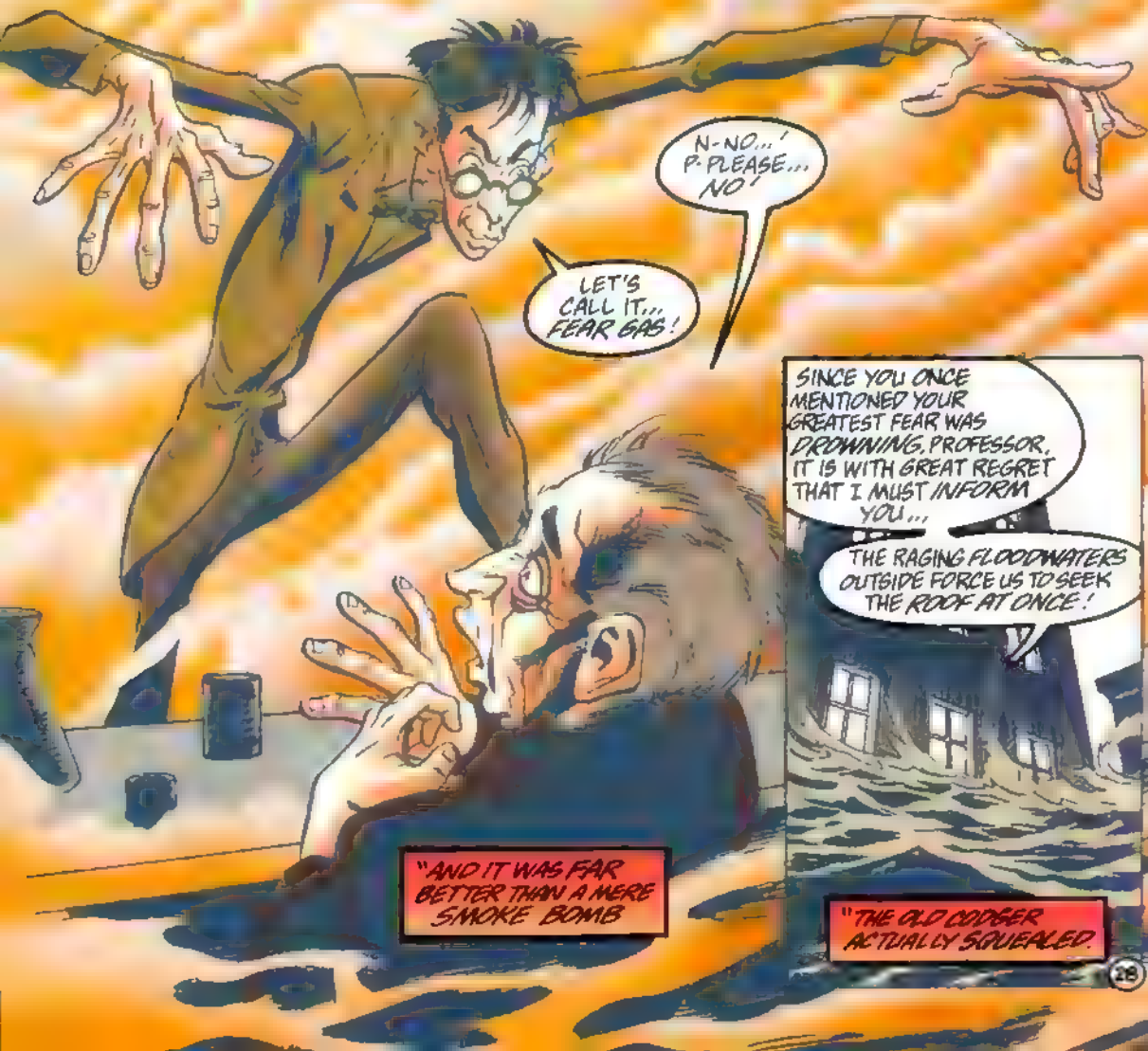


"I WANTED NOTHING MORE THAN TO BE
HIS COLLEAGUE-- TO BE HIM, IN FACT--
BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY WAS FULLY STAFFED, WITH
NO OPENINGS IN SIGHT.

"SINCE I DID NOT CARE FOR MY ONLY OTHER OPTION--MOVING AWAY FROM GOTHAM TO SEEK MY FUTURE ELSEWHERE--I SOUGHT A SOLUTION BY IMMERSING MYSELF IN MY LIFE'S ONE OTHER GREAT OBSESSION..."



"WHEN I WAS DONE, IT WAS TIME FOR THE INEVITABLE--AND I INVITED PROFESSOR BRANDOWITZ OVER TO THE CHEM LAB TO SAY GOODBYE..."



PLAYING HIS FEARS LIKE A MAESTRO, I URGED BRAMOWITZ HIGHER AND EVER HIGHER...

QUICKLY, PROFESSOR-- THE WATERS ARE STILL RISING!

PLEASE, CRANE-- YOU MUST HELP ME!

IT'S LAPPING AT YOUR FEET, PROFESSOR-- AT YOUR ANKLES-- TRYING TO DROWN YOU! GET AWAY FROM IT, PROFESSOR-- GET AWAY!

N-NO... NO!

NYAAAAHH

"I WAS THE VERY FIRST APPLICANT, WAITING ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO RENT A NEW SUIT..."

AS THE LATE PROFESSOR BRAMOWITZ'S PROTEGE, CRANE, YOU'RE THE PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB.

THANK YOU, DEAN

THERE WAS NOW AN OPENING FOR PRECISELY THE POSITION I DESIRED

GOODBYE, PROFESSOR

...TEE HEE HEE.

ONE MONTH AGO

"WE MAKE TRIFLES
OF TERRORS!"
-William Shakespeare-

WITH INCREASED
BLOOD PRESSURE
AND PULSE, FEAR
RELEASES
GLANDULAR
SECRETIONS OF
ADRENALIN,
FACILITATING
FLIGHT--

YET IT ALSO
RELEASES OTHER
BIOCHEMICALS WHICH
INTERFERE WITH
NEUROMUSCULAR
RESPONSE...

...RESULTING IN TREMBLING
STUTTERING, DRYNESS OF
THE THROAT, NAUSEA,
SPASMS, INCONTINENCE,
VISUAL DISTORTION,
CARDIAC ARRHYTHMIA,
AND--

I THOUGHT
THIS WAS A
PSYCHOLOGY
COURSE--AND
PRESUMABLY THERE
ARE STATES OF MIND
OTHER THAN FEAR

WHERE THE PSYCHE
IS CONCERNED, FEAR
IS EVERYTHING! IT
PROVIDES OUR EVERY
MOTIVE AND GOVERNS
OUR EVERY RESPONSE!

THE
VERY ACT
OF LIVING
IS NOTHING
BUT A
CONDITIONED
RESPONSE TO
THE FEAR OF
DEATH!

AND HERE, FOR
EXAMPLE, ARE THREE
TYPES OF FEAR...

ONE--
FEAR OF MY
UNKNOWN
INTENTIONS!

TWO--
FEAR OF AN
OBJECT
INVESTED
WITH ALMOST
SUPERNATURAL
POWER--THE
GUN!

"AND THREE--THE
SIMPLE, PRIMAL FEAR
OF AN ABRUPT, LOUD
NOISE!"

B-BLEEDING.

EVEN AFTER A YEAR OF TRYING TO TEACH
THE GOATS, I COULDN'T BELIEVE THEIR
SLOWNESS...

BUT CONSIDERING THE SWIFTESS OF WHAT FOLLOWED THAT EPISODE, THE DEAN AND HIS FOUR TOADIES MUST HAVE CONVENED AT ONCE.

-- NO MORE THAN AN INCH FROM THE YOUNG WOMAN'S EYE.

OUTRAGEOUS CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR!

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT HE'S LEFT US WIDE OPEN TO A JUSTIFIABLE LAWSUIT.

THEN WE'RE UNANIMOUS?

WE HAVE NO CHOICE. JONATHAN CRANE IS HEREBY--

--DISMISSED? FOR NOTHING MORE THAN PERFORMING A SIMPLE BUT HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM DEMONSTRATION?!

VERY WELL... IF I AM PROFESSOR CRANE NO LONGER, THEN I MUST BECOME SOMETHING ELSE-- THE VERY ICON OF MY LIFELONG FEAR AND FRUSTRATION...

... THE VERY THING ALL THE BIG HANDSOME BULLIES HAVE FORCED ON ME-- THE THING I WAS CURSED AND DESTINED TO BE!

CRANE NO MORE-- A FRIGHTENED BIRD NEVER AGAIN-- BUT NOW THE SINISTER SCARECROW, MASTER OF FEAR!

Crane's parents are both dead, leaving him with no past

Don't know how to find him, but when I do...

... I'll be ready

LAST NIGHT:

THERE IS NOTHING
THAT FEAR DOES NOT
MAKE MEN BELIEVE.
-Marquis de Vauvenargues

WE HAVE SEVEN
APPLICANTS FOR THE
POSITION VACATED
BY JONATHAN CR...

THAT
NOISE...

GAS...COMING
IN THROUGH THE
AIR VENT... BUT
WHO...?

Emergency
Exit

THE SCARECROW...A
SYMBOL OF POVERTY AND
FEAR!

SINCE YOU INSIST
ON DEPRIVING ME OF
MY LIVELIHOOD AND
PREVENTING ME FROM
PASSING ON MY
HARD-WON KNOWLEDGE
OF FEAR...

LET ME
TEACH YOU,
GENTLEMEN,"
MY FAREWELL
LESSON

EEEEAAAAAHHH

AS SCHILLER SAID,
"THE DELIGHT OF REVENGE...
IS MURDER"

"AND SO MY PAST WAS
DONE... AND I NEEDED
A NEW JOB."

Here

In the charred
rubble of Crane's
desk...

And Crane's predecessor--
Professor Avram Brammory
"fell" to his death from the
roof of Gotham University's
chemistry building

But what does
it mean...

Until three other chemical
companies moved into
the area, Fontana ChemCorp
enjoyed a monopoly in
Gotham

Now, with orders split
four ways, it's a simple
case of too many players
for a limited market
to bear...

...with one or more of the
competing companies
destined to go under--but
Crane never worked for
any of them

So what's the
connection?

TONIGHT:

EXTREME TERROR GIVES US BACK
THE GESTURES OF OUR CHILDHOOD
—Malcolm & Chaz!



WH-WHO...
WHO IS
THAT?

SOMEONE WHO'S MADE A
STUDY OF YOUR FEAR. MR.
FONTANA... BEING DRIVEN OUT
OF BUSINESS AFTER ALL YOUR
HARD WORK BY UNSCRUPULOUS
COMPETITION MOVING INTO
GOTHAM... COMPETITORS I CAN
SCARE OFF FOR
YOU



Y-YOU... YOU
KNOW ABOUT
SHAINES...
COWPER...
BANION?



I KNOW THEY'RE
DRIVING YOU INTO THE
GROUND, FONTANA.

I KNOW YOU HAVE
ENOUGH CASH FLOW--\$10,000
--TO CONTINUE OPERATIONS FOR
ANOTHER MISERABLE THREE
MONTHS OF FEAR...

JUST WHO
ARE YOU?



NOW, YOU
CAN USE YOUR
REMAINING CAPITAL TO BUY
THREE MONTHS OF ULCERS...
OR YOU CAN GIVE IT TO ME.

CHOOSE THE
LATTER AND ALL
OF YOUR FEARS
WILL BE VISITED ON
YOUR COMPETITORS
THIS VERY NIGHT
...LETTING YOU
RECLAIM YOUR
CORNER ON
THE MARKET
TOMORROW



B-BUT... THIS IS
CRAZY... SOME SKINNY
GUY IN A HALLOWEEN
COSTUME SNEAKS IN HERE,
I'M SUPPOSED TO...



Y-YOU...
YOU'RE KIDDING,
RIGHT?



SEE IF YOU CAN LAUGH, FONTANA...

Emperor
Lustm...

...WHEN THIS ROOM STARTS SHRINKING!



N-NO! PLEASE--IT'S GETTING TOO SMALL...TOO TIGHT!

L-LET ME OUT OF HERE!

EASY, FONTANA, IT'S JUST A TEMPORARY HALLUCINATION...



...INDUCED BY A DILUTED MIX OF MY FEAR GAS... BUT SAY THE WORD, AND YOUR RIVALS RECEIVE DOSES OF FULL POTENCY.

IT...IT'S GOING AWAY... R-ROOM ...GETTING BIGGER AGAIN...



AS I PROMISED, FOOL!

Y-YOU... YOU'RE H-HIRED.

"AND THERE YOU HAVE IT, THE STORY OF MY LIFE UP TO THIS VERY NIGHT--"



--AND THE BEGINNING, CRAW, OF MY NEW AND GAINFULLY EMPLOYED FUTURE...



WRAAAAAH

KRWWWWW

...MARKED BY THE END OF RAYMOND COWPER'S LIFE!

--SINGLE STALK OF
STRAW, JUST LIKE THE
FIRST ONE

IT WAS ON THE NIGHT
TABLE IN RAYMOND
COWPER'S BEDROOM,
NEXT TO HIS DEAD
BODY.

HEART
ATTACK
AGAIN?

YES--SCARED
TO DEATH-- JUST
LIKE THE DEAN AND
HIS FOUR
REGENTS...

AND WE'RE
DEALING WITH
ANOTHER
PROMINENT
VICTIM... SINCE
RAYMOND
COWPER
WAS--

THE OWNER OF
ALCHEMOCORP

HOW IN
BLAZES DID
YOU KNOW
TH--

EH--?
GONE
AGAIN?

*Got to move fast with three
potential victims remaining...*

*...make sure Crane
has committed his
last murder*

NOW

FEAR GIVES SUDDEN
INSTINCTS OF SKILL

Didn't take much to scare
Skarnes, Fontana, and Banion
out of town for a week...

News of a competitor's
death travels fast...

Add the deep, grating voice
of an anonymous phone
call and they couldn't
wait to pack.

Fontana seemed
especially terrified--
probably safe to
ignore his house.

And first or second,
sooner or later, Crane
will come here.

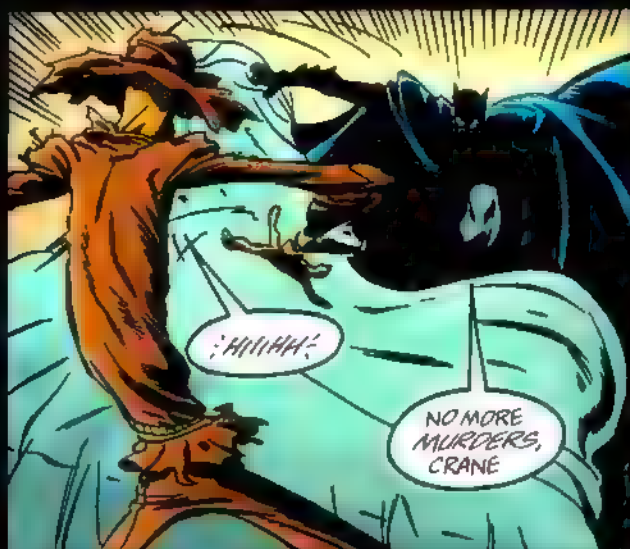
SNAKES,
BANION... YOUR
GREATEST
FEAR

YOU SEE, I
MAKE A STUDY
OF MY VICTIMS...
THE BETTER TO
PREY ON THEIR
SPECIFIC
PHOBIAS...

AWAKEN, BANION... TO MY
WRITHING SACK OF COBRAS
AND--

:H55555:

WHA--Z



“HIIHH!”

NO MORE
MURDERS,
CRANE



WH--? I'M
NOT CRANE!
I'M THE
SINISTER
SCARECROW--
MASTER OF
FEAR!

WH- WHO...
WHO ARE
YOU?!



FEAR
ITSELF

N-NO... YOU'RE THAT
“CREATURE OF THE NIGHT”
THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT...
THE BAT-MAN...



BUT YOU'RE
REALLY NOTHING
BUT ANOTHER BIG
BULLY-- JUST LIKE
THE ONES FROM
SCHOOL--
AND ALL THE
OTHERS--
TRYING TO
FRIGHTEN
ME!

BUT I
WILL NOT
BE--



--SCARED!

BAMM



KUNK

GIVE IT UP,
SCARECROW!

But he flees...

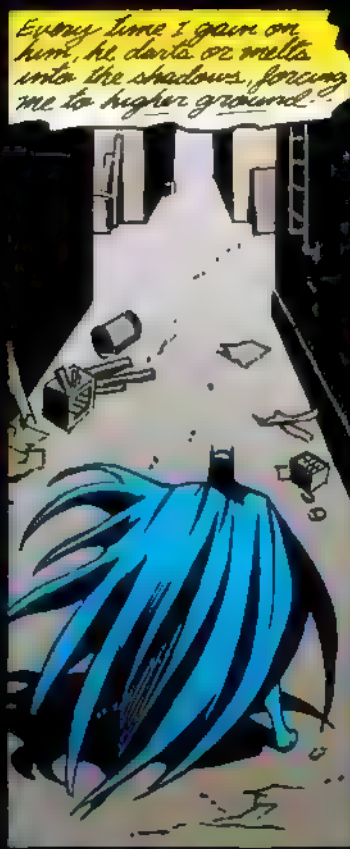
...a bizarre tatterdemalion
of fear...



...slipping the night
with the speed of his
own terror



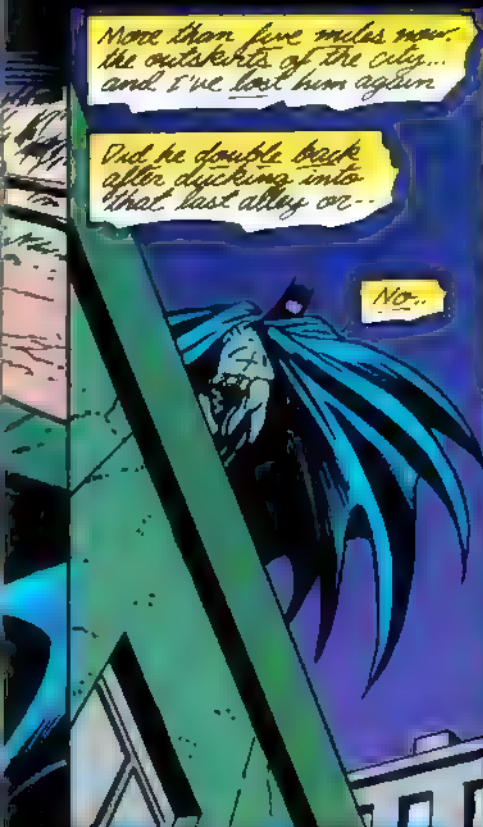
Those long legs
make him deceptively
fast...



Every time I gain on
him, he darts or melts
into the shadows, forcing
me to higher ground...



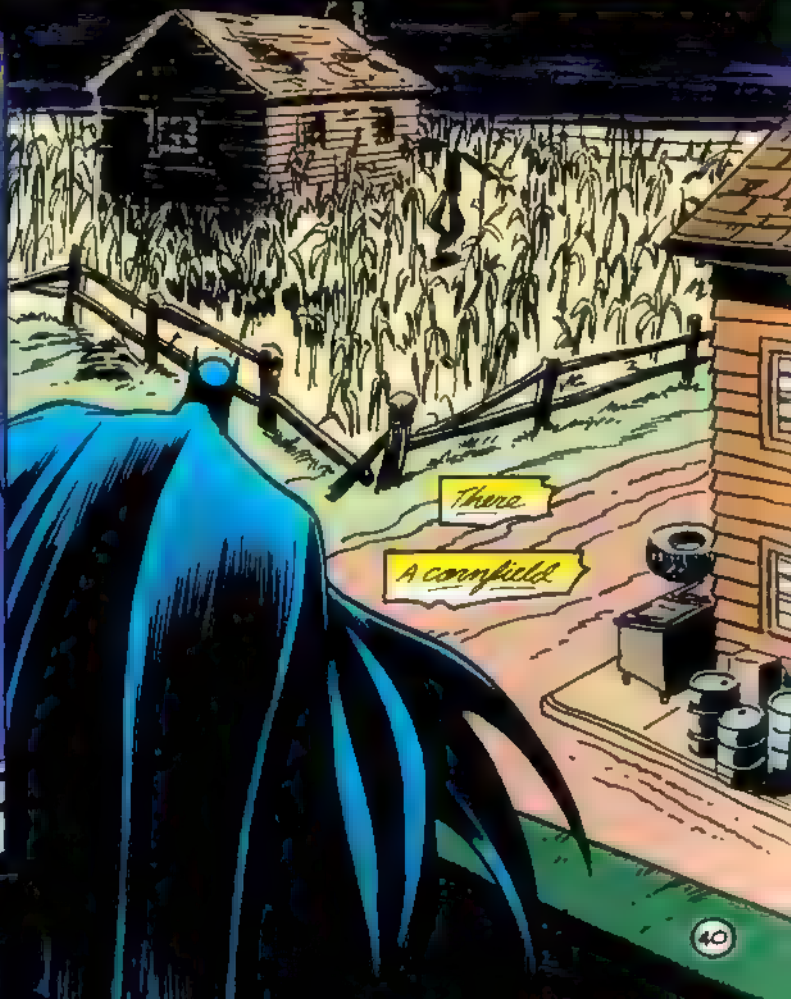
--and by the time I
pick him up again,
he's pulled farther
ahead, running me
ragged



More than five miles now,
the outskirts of the city...
and I've lost him again

Did he double back
after ducking into
that last alley or...

No...



There

A cornfield



"IT'S OVER CRANE. I KNOW YOU'RE IN HERE!"



Books...
... moved from Crane's apartments... but where is...







!HWOOF! AHAAH--
THERE YOU
ARE!



CAN YOU
DANCE, BIG
BULLY?

CAN YOU
KEEP STEP
WITH THE
SCARECROW?!



COME ON--
MOCK ME NOW,
BULLY!

LET'S HEAR
THE JEERS,
BIG MAN!



OR ARE YOU
ALL OUT OF
BREATH,
WINDBAG?!



CHOMP





ASYLUM
FOR
CRIMINALLY
THE
INSANE

...ress he haunt...

...and hopefully never escape.

...to a darkness he
can forever haunt...

...and hopefully
never escape.

Maybe even to a hellish
confinement right between
Two-Face and the Joker.

HIROOOAAA

Madness, fear, and laughter...

Arkham is shaping
up as quite a place...

APKHAM ASYLUM
FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

It scares me

END